

FROM <i>Dick Schulze</i>			CONTROL NO. <i>ACIL-9070</i>
SUBJECT AND DATE <i>Valley Forge Army Hospital - Phoenixville, PA</i>			DATE REC'D <i>4/17/90</i>
			DUE DATE <i>4/24/90</i>
REFERRED (1) <i>Kim Lonasco</i>	(2) <i>(HWD)</i>	(3)	(4)
DATE			
REPLY SENT TO <i>Kim Lonasco's In Bin, located on the 8th Floor - Extension x9072</i>			DATE RELEASED
REMARKS Please prepare response for the RA's signature; unless it's an AL Control and states the response is for the Administrator's (HQ) signature. <u>List</u> on Yellow Concurrence: 1) Name of Originator, Mail Code and Extension 2) First and Last Name of Typist  PLEASE DO NOT STAPLE ANYTHING TO THE YELLOW CONG. FOLDERS!			ACKNOWLEDGED - DATE  <input type="checkbox"/> NO ANSWER NEEDED  <input type="checkbox"/> (Explain in remarks)

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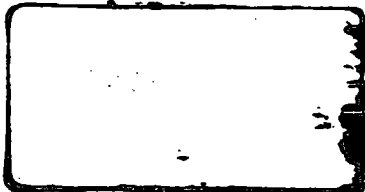
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## UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION III

841 Chestnut Building  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

APR 30 1990

Honorable Richard Schulze  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Schulze:

Thank you for your letter of April 12, 1990, regarding the concerns of your constituent, James R. Freeman, Esq., about the former Valley Forge Army Hospital in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania.

At this time, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not have any information on the former Valley Forge Army Hospital. However, since there are reports of alleged contamination, the EPA will perform a Preliminary Assessment (PA) at this facility as a first step in determining whether the site will qualify for cleanup under the Superfund Program. This PA will include a file search and a visit to the property to determine its historical uses as well as its current condition. The visit will probably occur in early Summer, 1990. Based upon the information obtained during the PA, the EPA will determine if further investigation is required.

If we can be of further assistance please contact this office again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Edwin B. Erickson", is written over a horizontal line.

Edwin B. Erickson  
Regional Administrator

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Sincerely,

Edwin B. Erickson  
Regional Administrator

Eiser 3HW13 - X-8333

CONCURRENCES							
SYMBOL	3HW13						
SURNAME	EISER	Ryan	Erickson				
DATE	4/27	4/27					

# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives • Washington, DC 20515

April 12, 1990

Mr. Ted Erickson  
Regional Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Region III Office  
841 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

Dear Ted:

Enclosed please find correspondence from one of my constituents, Mr. James R. Freeman, Esq., who contacted my district office regarding alleged contamination on the site of the former Valley Forge Army Hospital in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. The property is currently owned by the Phoenixville Area School District.

Please investigate the facts of this situation and advise my district office in writing of your findings.

With all best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,



DICK SCHULZE  
Member of Congress

DS/th

Enclosure

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

☐ 2389 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-8761

☐ 10 SOUTH LEOPARD RD.  
SUITE 204  
PAOLI, PA 19301  
800-362-6652 (TOLL FREE)  
215-648-0855

ORIGINAL  
(Red)

LAW OFFICES  
**JAMES R. FREEMAN**  
808 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
PHOENIXVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA 19460  
(215) 935-7744  
FAX (215) 935-2880

April 9, 1990

The Honorable Richard T. Schulze  
10 S. Leopard Road  
Suite 204  
Paoli, PA 19301

Dear Dick:

Recently I became aware of an unfortunate coincidence which exists in Schuylkill Township and I thought you would want to be apprised of it. The matter relates to property now owned by the Phoenixville Area School District, which property was formerly the site of the Valley Forge Army Hospital. According to three area newspapers, the EVENING PHOENIX, the Pottstown MERCURY and the Philadelphia INQUIRER, dangerously high levels of toxic metals have recently been discovered on the property, which toxins are possibly the result ashes from burnt x-rays which were dumped at the site while the Hospital was in operation. I am enclosing copies of the aforesaid articles for your review.

Coincidentally with the alleged contamination, a twenty-year-old young man who lived on a property adjacent to the site for eight years has recently been diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease. In dealing with this tragedy his parents have become aware of at least three others from the same neighborhood and a fourth person from another area adjacent to the former Hospital property who have been diagnosed with the same disease. I have enclosed a list which specifies the names and details of those involved.

As I am sure you can imagine, the unhappy discovery of this cluster of Hodgkin's Disease is of great concern, not only to the families directly involved, but to the community at large. Should you find it fitting to request an investigation of the alleged contamination and its possible effects on the well-being of nearby residents, it would be greatly appreciated. I thank you for any consideration you might give to this matter and should you require further information, upon being advised of its nature, I would be happy to attempt to obtain same.

Very truly yours,

  
JAMES R. FREEMAN

JRF/af  
Enclosures, as stated  
cc: (b) (6)

EVERGREEN ACRES

1.

2.

3.

4.

(b) (6)

BEVAN'S ORCHARD

1.

(b) (6)

# The Evening Phoenix

Volume 102 • Number 157 • Final Edition

30 Cents

## Residents link cancer to army hospital grounds

By KONRAD KUROWIEC  
Evening Phoenix Staff

**SCHUYLKILL** — Five area residents who have Hodgkin's disease have more than cancer in common — they are all neighbors of the former Valley Forge Army Hospital.

And that's no coincidence, they say. Their stories about battling with the cancer convinced at least one member of the Schuylkill Township Board of Supervisors last night to agree to contact the federal Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Ga., about testing soil at the former hospital site for toxins.

Hodgkin's disease is marked by inflammatory enlargement of the lymph nodes, spleen, liver and

kidneys, which mainly strikes males between the ages of 18 to 40.

Four of the local residents who either have the disease or are in remission are current or former residents of South Evergreen Drive, which bordered the former hospital.

Michael K. Fulmer Jr., 21, of Oakton Drive in Bevens Orchard, a development that borders the Valley Forge Christian College, was first diagnosed with the disease three years ago. He underwent chemotherapy and radiation treatments to remove the cancer, but it was discovered a second time.

Michael K. Fulmer, Sr. said his son first underwent treatment at Lankenau Hospital, but he's now being treated at the Fox Chase Cancer Center in northeast Philadelphia.

"My son has lung damage from radiation," Fulmer said. "It (the cancer) normally relapses quite."

"I found out I had the disease three months ago," said Jeff Kurtz, 20. "I want to know what's going on here."

Kurtz, an Auburn University student whose home is on North Forge Mountain Drive, lived on South Evergreen Drive from 1973 to 1981.

Frank Robinson, 44, of South Evergreen Drive, is undergoing radiation treatment for the disease.

Two other former South Evergreen Drive residents who previously underwent treatments for the disease are Bob Dyer, 35, and Dennis Andrews, 27.

A high concentration of toxic chemicals had already been discovered on a nearby portion of the

land owned by the Phoenixville Area School District, which was once the site of the hospital.

The army hospital operated there for over 30 years, treating servicemen wounded in World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars. It closed in 1974. Most of the site, located in Charlestown and Schuylkill townships, is occupied by the Valley Forge Christian College, but a portion of the property was sold by the federal government to the school district.

District Superintendent Carolyn Trobashi reported in January that the land owned by the district was contaminated with heavy metals.

Lancaster Labs, a consultant hired by the district,

(Continued on Page 2)

## Cancer linked to grounds

(Continued from Page 1)

reported levels of hazardous metals, including lead and zinc, were abnormally high in a depressed 120 square foot area of a 35-acre piece of property on Township Line and East Seven Stars roads.

The toxins came from X-ray remains burned in the hospital's incinerator. The ashes in the samples collected by Lancaster Labs contained the chemicals.

"We have a deep concern about the toxic waste found in the hospital," said James Kurtz, Jeff's father. "Four people came down with it in six families (in

adjacent homes on South Evergreen Drive.) What else did they bury down there?"

"The school board must have some idea something is wrong there," said Frank Robinson. "My daughter plays baseball out there and I don't feel real confident with that."

Supervisor G. Edward Heit told the residents to bring any other pertinent information to the board at next Wednesday's 7:30 p.m. meeting because the board lacked a quorum to conduct business last night.

"As far as I'm concerned, one of us will contact the Disease Control Center," Heit said.

ORIGINAL  
(Red)

## Schuylkill

# Disease afflicts residents

By Daniel Kaufman  
Special to The Inquirer

Five men who lived near contaminated land on the old Valley Forge Army Hospital property off Charles town Road have developed Hodgkin's disease within the last 15 years, the Schuylkill Township Board of Supervisors was told last week.

Three of the men, accompanied by family members, asked the supervisors Wednesday night to prod federal, state and/or county authorities to investigate a possible connection between their lymphatic cancer and toxic metals found on the land.

The Phoenixville Area School District, which leases a 33-acre piece of the property on Township Line Road near Coldstream Road from the federal government, announced it had discovered abnormally high levels of lead, zinc and silver on a depressed 6-by-20-foot section in January.

At that time, school Superintendent Carolyn Troboid said burial X-ray remains buried by the hospital before it closed in 1974 had caused the contamination.

Frank Robinson, 61, said, "I live there, I'm sick now and four of my neighbors are sick. Did they just bury it in one spot or did they spread it around?"

Hodgkin's disease, a rare but "very curable" form of lymph cancer, often strikes men between their late teens and early 40s, said Chris Holroyde, an oncologist at Phoenixville Hospital who is treating several of the men.

From 1971 until 1981, Robinson lived on South Evergreen Drive, which lies northeast of the contaminated area. Jeff Kurtz, 28, who also was diagnosed with cancer this year, lived there from 1973 until 1981. Michael Palmer, 21, was diagnosed three years ago and still lives on Gallic Drive, located on the other side of the Army hospital.

Two other residents of South Evergreen Drive who once had the disease were not present at the meeting.

Holroyde said the cluster of cases next to the hospital was "very unusual." Because the cause of the disease is not known, however, "it is a statistical aberration which is interesting, but we can't prove anything."

The victims and their families asked the board, which had only two of its five members present, why it had never investigated whether the land was hazardous.

"Someone's dragging their feet," Kurtz said.

Supervisor Edward Helt said the board had notified the county Board of Health in West Chester a few days earlier after a friend of the residents told him about the five men last month.

"It sounds as though this situation had existed for some time," Helt said Thursday.

Helt said the board would postpone the meeting until 7:30 p.m. Wednesday when there would be a quorum.



# Toxic metals reported at school land

By ERIC JANZUELLI  
Evening Phoenix Staff

PHOENIXVILLE — Land owned by the Phoenixville School District located at the site of the former Valley Forge General Hospital is contaminated with toxic metals, according to Phoenixville School Superintendent Carolyn Trohoski.

Trohoski told the Phoenixville Area Board of School Directors this week that Lancaster Labs reported levels of hazardous metals are "anomalously high" in a depressed 6-by-20-foot area of a 35-acre tract of land bounded by Seven Stars and Township Line roads.

William Leggieri, general manager of the Perkiomen Valley Twilight Baseball League's Norristown A's, said last week he wants to pioneer a semipro baseball team in Phoenixville, and one of the sites under consideration is the one suspected of being contaminated.

Fielding a team will not be a problem, Leggieri said, but finding a facility could be.

"We told the (people from) the semipro team to wait until we got the tests back" on the site, said Trohoski Thursday night. "We aren't sure of the exact condition."

The Lancaster Labs reported there was evidence of a lead concentration of 452 milligrams per kilogram and a zinc concentration of 320 mpk. The cost to clean up the site would be "very high," according to Trohoski.

Trohoski said X-ray remains caused the toxins.

"X-rays were burned by the incinerator (located on the site) and it was the ashes that were in the samples," she said. "The ashes contained silver nitrate and other chemicals."

Trohoski said there were no regulations for waste disposal when the ashes were burned. "We're living with the problems of the past," she said. "It was

## Toxic metals reported

(Continued from Page 1)

Board President Vincent J. O'Grady said he was concerned over the district's liability.

"Whoever owns the land is liable for it and its (potential) cleanup," said Solicitor Elliott Goldberg.

The school district acquired the land from the federal government with the stipulation to "use it or lose it," said Trohoski. She said the board could "give back the parts of land that are hazardous."

Goldberg said that would be legal, as long as the plots are well-defined.



# The Mercury

VOL. 60 NO. 90  
POTTSTOWN, PA. 19464  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 1990

A Pulitzer Prize-Winner

## Toxins found on school

By DEBRA NOELL  
Mercury Staff Writer

PHOENIXVILLE — Dangerously high levels of lead, zinc and silver have been found in the soil on a section of land in Schuylkill Township where the Phoenixville Area School District had planned to build an elementary school.

The 20-by-6-foot contaminated parcel is part of a 35-acre tract the district acquired

from the federal government when the Valley Forge Military Hospital closed at the site in 1978. Federal statutes allow local government bodies to lay claim to neglected federal land in their districts.

The school board claimed two separate tracts from the hospital property. The first lot, located near Evergreen Acres on Township Line Road, hasn't been found to be contaminated, according to Superintendent Carolyn Trohoski. Field hockey and lacrosse playing fields are located on the

land.

But the second section, located on Township Line Road near Coldstream Road, was found to have abnormally high levels of toxic materials in the soil, according to test results from Lancaster Laboratories.

A district maintenance building, bus lot and public softball field are located adjacent to the contaminated section, officials said. The board agreed Thursday night to test the soil near the softball field and maintenance building to determine if the

# Mercury

ing Newspaper

35 CENTS  
44 PAGES  
5 SECTIONS

## district land

rest of the lot has been contaminated.

The test results will help the board determine how much of the land to return to the federal government.

"We don't want it. It's damaged goods," board member Anthony Trezza said of the property.

The board also decided Thursday to scrap any plans for building an elementary school on the land. The long-range district plan included building on the lot when

burgeoning student population demanded a new school.

Officials from the board's architectural firm, Huth Associates of Lancaster, said the contamination would cause "health and safety problems to humans."

The contaminated area aroused suspicions when rectangular areas near the site of a former incinerator began to sink, Trohoski said. "We've been watching the area because it's strange that it would sink  
(See TOXINS FOUND on 8)

# School land contaminated

## District planned to build elementary school at site

(TOXINS FOUND from 1)

in particular shapes," she added.

Lead, silver and zinc are metallic elements formerly used in photographic paper and X-rays. Officials believe X-ray waste from the hospital was buried on the land.

"The assumption is X-rays were burned in the incinerator and the ash was dumped in rectangular areas," Trohoski said.

The extent of contamination couldn't be immediately determined. "Whether the lead has

migrated in the soil, we don't know," Trohoski said.

District officials are questioning whether a nearby stream could also be tainted.

"I'm sure I'm raising concerns of the public, too," Trohoski said.

The school board has agreed to notify borough and township officials along with the Environmental Protection Agency about its findings.

APR 30 1990

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Sincerely,

Edwin B. Erickson  
Regional Administrator

*Elsar 3HW13 - X-8333*

CONCURRENCES							
SYMBOL	3HW13						
SURNAME	ELSER	Ryan	Erickson				
DATE	4/27	4/27					